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ABSTRACT

Unlike the student protest movements of the 1930's, which were linked to adult political parties, the dominant ones of the present constitute a genuine youth rebellion. This is primarily due to a change in the political climate in the last 10 years, with emphasis shifting from events and threats from abroad to social ills at home. Student activism is generally a result of social discontent. Though a small minority, activist students have dominated the political tone of many campuses (they are characteristically from homes of liberal persuasion that are relatively well to do). Once activated, student groups can play a major role in mobilizing public opinion. The factors that motivate students to action are those frustrating elements in the student role. Students are by occupation a marginal group: they are in a period of transition with no specific social or occupational role, often dependent on their parents, and in an environment that is full of tension and primarily idealistic. Involvement in university life and often the political traditions and image of the institution itself make politics a particularly critical source of self-expression. The changing faculty role has helped create a climate of opinion that presses students to the left, and because of fewer commitments students are more available for new political movements. (AF)

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AMERICAN STUDENT ACTIVISM

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Any effort to interpret the changing political behavior of American students in recent years is subject to the difficulty that it is dealing with a local aspect of a worldwide phenomenon. Although the events which precipitated student activism vary from country to country, and the targets of student attack differ, there are more common themes than differences in the tactics and ideologies of the movements. Unlike the youth and student movements of the 1930s which were linked to adult political parties, the dominant ones of the present constitute a genuine youth rebellion, one which is almost as much levied against the major parties of the left, and the Soviet Union, as it is against the moderates and conservatives. The lack of involvement in adult politics has given free rein to the propensity of youth to adhere to absolute principles, to

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engage in expressive rather than instrumental politics. Little concerned with the immediate consequences of their actions, the new left student movements appear ready to destroy all existing structures, including the university, and to use tactics which alienate the great majority, in order to make manifest their contempt, their total rejection of the intolerable world created by their elders. This rejection of responsibility characterizes student groups in Japan, France, Germany, the United States, and many other countries.

To understand the reasons why the relatively passive post-war generation has been replaced by one which contains an activist minority of the "enraged," it is important to note the extent to which some of the conditions which dampened ideological controversy during the 40s and 50s have changed. Essentially the politics of the two earlier decades were dominated by the international struggle against totalitarian expansionism, first by the Axis powers, and then by Stalinist Communism. In both instances, the threats to democracy, to the institutions of western society were manifest and real. And given a high degree of concensus among liberal intellectuals concerning the threat, many who were deeply critical of various domestic institutions and practices found themselves

defending the fundamental character of their societies as moral and decent against the totalitarian critics. For a brief period, historically speaking, western democratic intellectuals found themselves engaging in actions which belied their role as critics. This period was broken by changes within Communist society, as well as increasing awareness of the social conditions existing in the third underdeveloped world. The breakdown of monolithic Communism, the rise of liberal opposition tendencies in various eastern countries, the intensity of the Sino-Soviet split, all served to undermine the conviction that all men of good will and all non-Communist nations must unite to fight totalitarian expansionism. In a real sense, the cold war came to an end.

This change had considerable impact on those members of the older generation who had remained liberal critics, but had kept quiet either because they agreed with the assumptions justifying unity against the Communist threat, or because they feared social or political sanctions from the supporters of anti-Communism. Many of them had been active when younger in various radical movements, and though publically quiescent had continued their criticisms within private circles. As a group, they were concentrated

among college educated professionals and intellectuals, including particularly university faculties. Jews as a group had been relatively heavily involved in radical activities in the 1930s and 40s, a phenomenon which stemmed from continuity with the political values brought over from the ghettoes of eastern Europe, from experience with domestic anti-Semitism which was particularly strong in the United States until the end of World War II, and from an identification of Nazism with conservatism and militant anti-communism. As ideological anti-communism lost strength, the former radicals and left liberals returned in some measure to their earlier beliefs. More significant, however, was the emergence among younger intellectuals and students of widespread social criticism, sentiments which were often encouraged by their "liberated" elders. The new generations of liberals who knew not Hitler and Stalin, the Czech coup and the Hungarian revolution, from first-hand experience, found little reason to restrain applying their moral beliefs to politics.

This change in ideological climate, as well as the rather rapid escalation of protest from words to action, was facilitated by the struggle for Negro rights which

emerged in the years following the Supreme Court's school desegregation decision of 1954. This was the perfect issue around which to create a new activist movement, since it engaged the principal aspect of American society, in which the system engaged in actions which were at sharp variance with its manifest creed of equality and democracy. Most Americans, and the university system in toto, recognized that Negro inequality is evil, and in principle, approved all actions designed to reduce or eliminate it. Hence race was the easiest issue around which the new political criticism could mobilize. To organize to fight segregation, particularly in the South, was not a radical act. Yet the struggle, itself, contributed greatly to radicalizing sections of the young. In this particular situation, the conservative or traditionalist forces introduced the tactics of civil disobedience, and even of violence, i.e., the Southern segregationists refused to accept the law as laid down by the Supreme Court and Congress, and taught the advocates of civil rights, both the black community and white students that the regular peaceful methods of democracy would not work. The confrontationist tactics of civil disobedience, which first emerged in the South, were then diffused by

the American student movement to other parts of the country and the world, and to other issues both inside and outside of the university.

The aggressive tactics of the civil rights movement were successful as judged by the criteria of actions taken by different agencies of government to outlaw discrimination, and to foster economic and educational improvements. Whatever the profound limitations of these, the fact remains that more has been attempted by government to improve the situation of the Negro in recent years than in all the preceding years since Reconstruction. Many of these actions, particularly by the Administration, Congress, and local agencies, can be credited as responses to political militancy or the fear of ghetto riots. But though these efforts attest to the value of political action, they have not resulted in any major visible change in the position of the bulk of the Negroes. They remain poor, segregated, and uneducated, securing the leavings of the labor market. To each group of civil rights concerned youth who have come to political consciousness during this period, the gap between what ought to be and what actually exists appears to have increased rather than decreased. They take for granted the existing structure,

including the changes which had been made, and react with outrage against the continued sources of Negro deprivation. Older liberals, on the other hand, have often reacted with pleasure at the considerable progress that had been made within the past few years. Thus an inevitable age-related split has occurred. This division between the generations has been particularly acute within the Negro community. To younger Negroes, the gains made since the 1950s appear empty, in face of the existing pattern of Negro social and economic inferiority. And on the major campuses of the nation, the growing minority of Negro students have found themselves in a totally white dominated world, facing few, if any, black faculty, and a white student body whose liberal and radical wing turned increasingly after 1964 from involvement in civil rights protest to activity directed against the Viet Nam war. The concern with black power, with Negro control over their own communities, and particularly civil rights organizations, has won growing support among black college students. Most recently, these students have played a major role in confronting university administrations with demands for more Negro students and faculty, and for changes in the curriculum. Black students have been among the major

forces initiating sit-ins during the 1967-68 school year at schools as diverse and separated as San Francisco State College, Columbia University, Boston University, Northwestern University, and many predominantly Negro institutions as well.

The issue of the acceptable pace of reform also has been affected by events abroad, particularly in Cuba and Viet Nam. The triumph of the Castro movement, an event dominated by young men, produced an example of a revolution, seemingly uncontaminated by Stalinism. Cuban events helped to generate the sense that revolution was both possible and desirable as a way to eliminate social evils. Again generational differences divided the liberal-left communities. The older ones had learned from experience that revolutions could lead to totalitarianism, to new intense forms of exploitation, to cynical betrayals of the popular will as in Czechoslovakia in 1948, or Hungary in 1956. To many youth raising such matters seemed only to justify inaction against the intolerable aspects of the status quo.

The spread of opposition to the Viet Nam war has, of course, become the dominant political issue affecting student activism. To the older generation, including

initially most liberals, Viet Nam was but the most recent episode in a two decade long struggle against Communist imperialist expansion. To the new generations of the children of liberals and former radicals, Viet Nam became defined in terms which placed American actions at odds with certain basic American beliefs, those of anti-imperialism, of the right of self-determination of politically weak peoples. Given the existence of a poly-centric divided Communism, it simply did not make sense to perceive Vietnamese Communism as an extension of Russian or Chinese power. The very failure of the powerful United States to quickly defeat its small poor Vietnamese opposition has been evidence of the oppressive character of the war, of its being a war in which a foreign power seeks to impose its will by force over another people. The very values which led Americans to be suspicious of and opposed to the British, French, and Dutch empires, which were called into play to justify World Wars I and II, and the Korean war, have now been turned against the United States.

A general analysis of the changing political climate as it has encouraged student dissatisfaction, of course, does not explain why students <u>qua</u> students have played such an important role in stimulating protest. Here it

must be noted that students have almost invariably been more responsive to political trends, to changes in mood, to opportunities for social change than any other group in the population, except possibly intellectuals. As a result students have played a major role in stimulating unrest and fostering change in many countries. The special role of students has been particularly noted in the Revolutions of 1848, in the Russian revolutionary movement, which was largely a student one until 1905, in the various Chinese movements during the first quarter of the twentieth century, in the different fascist movements in Italy, Germany, and Spain, before they took power, in a host of colonial and underdeveloped states, and in various Communist countries since 1956.

Historically then, one would learn to expect a sharp increase in student activism whenever events call accepted political and social values into question, in times particularly where policy failures seem to question the adequacy of social, economic, and political arrangements and institutions. Although it may be argued that student activism is the result, rather than the cause of social discontent, it is important to recognize that once activated, student groups have played a major role in

mobilizing public opinion behind the causes and ideologies fostered by them. Social unrest causes student unrest, but once they start expressing their disquiet, students and intellectuals have been in many ways the vanguard of political change.

Awareness of the important role of students has led to efforts to detail those aspects of the situation of students generally, as well as in specific times and places, which press them to act politically. The factors to which attention has been called in the growing literature on the subject may be differentiated between those which motivate students to action and those which facilitate their participation.

Among the first are the frustrating elements in the student role. Students are by occupation marginal men. They are in transition between having been dependent on their families for income, status, and various forms of security and protection, and taking up their own roles in jobs and families. Studenthood is inherently a tension-creating period. The rapid growth in the number of students, seven million today as compared with one and a half million at the end of the 1930s, means both that the composition of the college population, as a group, has

come from increasingly less privileged families, and that the value of a college degree for status placement has declined.

The university has become more meritocratic; it is how well you do, rather than who you are that counts. Hence, young people in a society in which education increasingly determines how well they start in the struggle for place, find themselves facing a highly competitive situation. The pressures to conform to the requirements of the education establishment begin for many middle-class and aspiring working-class youth in elementary school and intensify in high-school. Hard work and ability at each level only serve to qualify the individual to enter an even more difficult competition at the next rung in the educational ladder. While some succeed, many must show up as mediocre or must rank low.

There is a variety of evidence which suggests that these tensions affect the emotional stability of many teenagers and college youth, even the most able among them. Such tensions may find varying outlets, of which a rejection of the competitive social system which forces them into a rat race for grades is one. Although such tensions have always been present in the student role,

it should be noted that they have intensified considerably in the last decade and a half. The very expansion of the numbers going to universities throughout the world has made the situation worse, more competitive, than before.

The idealism of youth, to which reference is frequently made, is another stimulating factor which is an outgrowth of social expectations. Societies teach youth to adhere to the basic values of the system in absolute terms, equality, honesty, democracy, socialism, and the like. There is a maxim which exists in various forms in many countries: "He who is not a radical at 20 does not have a heart; he who still is one at 40 does not have a head." This statement is usually interpreted as a conservative one, assuming radicalism is an unintelligent response to politics. But the first part of the maxim may be even more important than the second, for it denotes a social expectation that young people should be radicals, that the older generation believes that youthful radicalism is praiseworthy behavior. It is the young conservative, the young "fogie," not the young radical who is out of step with social expectations.

The emphasis on youthful reformism is even greater in the United States than in many other countries, for

American culture places a premium on being youthful and on the opinions of youth. It tends in general to glorify youth and to deprecate age. Americans dislike admitting their increased age. Hence to look youthful, to behave youthfully, to adopt the dress, the sports, the dances, or the political and social views which are identified with youth, to gain acceptance from the youth by such behavior, is a way of holding back age.

Many American adults are reluctant, even when they consciously disagree, to sharply call students or youth to task. Rather they may encourage youth and students to take independent new positions, rather than emphasize the worth of experience. This ties in with the part of the American self-image which assumes that the United States is a progressive country, one which accepts reform and change. And the truism that the youth will inherit the future is linked with the sense that the youth are the bearers of the progressive ideas which will dominate the future, that youth will contribute to the enduring struggle to make the American creed of equality more meaningful.

The real world, of course, necessarily deviates considerably from the ideal, and part of the process of maturing is to learn to operate in a world of conflicting

values, roles, interests, and demands. Such compromises as this requires are viewed by youth as violations of basic morality. Students hang on to such beliefs longer than others. They tend, as Max Weber suggested, to develop an ethic of "absolute ends" rather than of "responsibility." They tend to be committed to ideals rather than institutions. Hence, those events which point up the gap between ideals and reality stimulate them to action.

Modern societies, moreover, are characterized by a prolongation of adolescence, usually devoted to educational development. Although physiologically mature, and often above the age legally defined as adult, students are expected to refrain from full involvement in the adult world. The very nature of university education is seen as calling for a withdrawal by the institution from the mainstream of society into an ivory tower, free from the constraints of politics and religion. Although living in a society which stresses that adults should establish their own status based on their individual abilities and achievements, students are expected to maintain a status in limbo, or to remain dependent on their family status. Such a situation can be highly frustrating, especially in a culture like the American, which places so much stress on individual

achievement. Thus the student, in addition to the opportunity to acquire an education, also requires the chance both to experiment with adult roles, and to exhibit his ability to achieve a position on his own.

Dependency is, of course, built into the very essence of the university system. Students are dependent as to the chances of their future placement on their standing with the faculty. The faculty has the power of certification through its control over grades. This gives them the right to influence what students read, and how they spend much of their time. The American university, in particular, with its stress on frequent examinations and faculty judgments, emphasizes this dependent relationship even more than does that of most other countries. The American system of higher education has remained closer to that of the high school. Hence, the student who leaves home to attend university finds that he remains in a highly controlled situation, while many aspects of the society urge him to become independent.

The constraints imposed on students living in university dormatories have proved to be particularly onorous. By acting in loco parentis, universities in America took on the role of constraining agent over the social life of

individuals who increasingly have claimed the right to be autonomous. And in a world in which 18 year olds are eligible for the draft, the effort of the university to maintain these controls has been inevitably doomed to failure. With the decline in average age at which Americans reach sexual maturity from a physical point of view, and the accompaning changes in the accepted norms concerning heterosexual sexual relations, the university has placed itself in the impossible position of seeking to enforce a status of social dependency, which even middle-class parents have found difficult to maintain.

It may be argued that student life in general and student activism in particular are among other things an expression of youth culture. The student stratum, as such, tends to create a whole array of age group symbols, which sets it apart from others in society, and from adults in particular. These include unique patterns of personal appearance (hair-do, clothes), peculiar modes of communication (jargon, dances), special styles of life (relatively low standard of living, but major expenditures on music or travel, or use of drugs as compared with adults' consumption of liquor). Political extremism, the formation of student political groups which are unaffiliated

with or at odds with adult political parties would seem to be another example of such behavior.

Involvement in university life makes politics a particularly critical source of self-expression. Students are given ample opportunity to discuss and study political matters. The university, itself, in spite of its emphasis on academic freedom and on being nonpartisan is increasingly involved in politics, as professors fulfill ever growing roles as party activists, intellectual commentators on political events, advisors, consultants, and as researchers on policy relevant matters. Many students are thus in centers of great political significance, but have little or no share in the political status of the university. Much of faculty political involvement, although generally on the left of the spectrum in the United States, occurs within the establishment. Hence, if it is to express a sense of separate identity, student politics as part of the student culture must be outside of and in opposition to that of most of the adults.

Although the student protest is directed against much of the adult world, including the faculty, it is important to note that changes in the backgrounds and opinions of increasing numbers of college faculty have

undoubtedly had considerable impact on their students. Before the 1930s, the American professoriate was not known especially for having strong political views, or for engaging in political action. This changed somewhat during the depression with the identification of the New Deal with reliance on academic expertise. Since the war particularly, various segments of the population with strong liberal views, which hitherto played very little role in university life, finally moved in a massive way onto the campus. This has been most visible in the enormous growth in the numbers of liberal Jewish faculty, but many of the non-Jews who have been attracted to university life, have similar views.

The university has become a major occupational outlet for many of the brightest people who seek to be innovative and free of the ideological restrictions and materialistic commitments which they believe inherent in the corporate and professional worlds. Once liberals entered the university, their influence has tended to be self-accelerating. The militant "New Deal" liberals and exponents of "modernist" culture have been able to change the entire temper of the university. Evidence drawn from a variety of surveys of student attitudes indicates that

colleges have a liberalizing effect on young people, particularly in areas linked to universalistic principles, racial equality, internationalism, peace, class relationships, as well as in more personal beliefs such as religion and sexual behavior. Samuel Stouffer pointed out over ten years ago that the conservatives who attack the universities for "corrupting" young people are right from their political and moral standpoints.

But if faculty help to create a climate of opinion which presses students to the left, ironically, at least some of the sources of student malaise stems from the fact that changes in the role of the faculty have contributed to making the situation of being a student less attractive than it once was. With increasing size and greater pressures on faculty to do research, publish, and take part in extra-mural activities, inherently one should expect to find poorer instruction, more faculty aloofness, and administrative indifference to students. The research-oriented faculty increasingly give a larger proportion of their limited teaching time to graduate students. University administration involves fund raising, lobbying public officials, handling of research contracts, and concern for recruiting and retaining prestigious faculty. There can be

little doubt that undergraduate students, as such, are of much less concern to the faculty and administration than in earlier periods of American education.

The very increase in the importance of the university as a center of influence and power, and as the major accreditating institution of the society, has reduced the informal influence of students within the university. The higher estates of the university, administrators and faculty, however, have sought to maintain their traditional authority and prerogatives, while reducing their own "responsibility" for the quality of the personal and intellectual lives of their students. This development is not simply or even principally a function of the growth of the university; it reflects even more the increased "professionalization" of the faculty, the extent to which "teaching" as such has declined as the main identification of the role of being a professor.

The changes in the role of the faculty, their increased involvement in a national prestige system, based on evaluations of their scholarly achievements or extramural activities, the sharp increase in their income, derivative in large part from the fact that many schools are in competition for those who have or promise to attain

general reputations, and the concomitant decline in faculty teaching obligations, have not necessarily made for a "happier" professoriate. Faculty, like students, are in an increasingly competitive situation, one in which men see themselves being judged as to their position in national and local pecking orders. While some succeed in becoming nationally recognized figures, most faculty necessarily turn out to be failures in the struggle for scholarly status. With the depreciation of the teaching function as a local source of economic reward and status, many who have lost out in the competition within their own generation, or who, if successful, fear or actually see younger men coming up and securing the status they once had, become deeply dissatisfied and anxious. The universities and colleges, which are increasingly competitive with each other in efforts at stock-piling distinguished scholars, encourage such feelings among both their older and younger faculty, by invidiously rewarding, often in a very public fashion, those men who are most valuable in this race for institutional prestige. Such sentiments reinforce faculty propensities to oppose the administrations of their schools, as well as the dominant values and institutions

of the larger society. Hence, many professors find solace in student militancy directed against the forces they hold responsible for their felt sense of status inferiority or insecurity. The same faculty which demands and secures lower teaching loads (ironically especially after student revolts which further reduce the "bargaining strength" of the university) often tell their students that they are neglected and misused by the administration and trustees.

It may be argued that American students, as students, are subject to greater strains and less rewards than those of previous generations, with the exception of the depression generation. Although the demand for "student power," for increased influence by students over the decision-making process in the university, tends on the whole to be raised by the left-wing activist groups, the receptivity which this demand secures in wider circles of students may reflect the increased sense of grievance, that the university demands more yet gives less in the form of personal relations (informal influence) among students, faculty, and administration. Thus as in the case of workers and employees in bureaucratized industry, a sort of student syndicalism would seem to be emerging which seeks to regain symbolically

for students as a group the influence which they have lost individually as a result of changes in the organization of universities.

Conversely, the often unconceptualized sense of grievance with their situation, a sense which in many cases is now consciously directed against the university, also may make many students, particularly those with a politically critical background, more receptive to political action directed against trends in the larger society. The two sources of activism thus reinforce one another; the more directly political uses campus discontent to create a set of issues around which to build a movement, while campus discontent may express itself in wider political issues. These are general aspects of student motivation to activism. It remains to look at why students are more prone to actually act than other groups. There are many aspects in the situation of the group which <u>facilitate</u> mass activity, which make it easier to recruit them for such action.

Young people are more available for new political movements than adults. As new citizens, as people entering the political arena, they are less committed to existing ideologies, they have few or no explicit political commitments,

they have no previous personal positions to defend, they are less identified with people and institutions which are responsible for the status quo. Inherently, they know less recent history than adults. For this current generation, as noted earlier, the key formative events in foreign policy terms have been the Viet Nam war, and domestically, in the United States, heightened awareness of the oppressed position of the American Negroes.

Students are also more available because of the lesser commitments they have to their "occupational" role as compared to adults. Max Weber, many years ago, pointed out that political activity is to a considerable extent a function of the extent to which job requirements are dispensible or not. In his terms, those who could take time off from work without suffering economic consequences are much more likely to be active than those who have to punch a time clock. Students (and professors) have perhaps the most dispensible job requirements of all. Students may drop out of school, may put off their studies for short or long periods, without paying a great price. They may often delay taking examinations. The numbers who dropped their books to take part in the McCarthy election campaign are a recent illustration of this.

Linked with this is the factor of "responsibility." As compared to other groups, students simply have fewer responsibilities in the form of commitments to families and jobs. Thus, the existence of punitive sanctions against extremist activism is less likely to affect students than those with greater responsibilities to others, or to a career ladder. Moreover, as noted earlier, students remain adolescents or juveniles sociologically, and they are often implicitly treated as such legally, particularly when they violate the law. In many societies, a number of the students involved in politically or otherwise motivated infractions are literally the children of the elite, a fact which serves to reduce the will to punish them. In addition, universities are generally run by liberal individuals who are not inclined to invoke severe sanctions against students. Students are under less pressure to conform than other groups.

Another factor which facilitates student political involvement is the physical situation of the university which makes it relatively easy to mobilize students who are disposed to act politically. The campus is the ideal place in which to find large numbers of people in a common situation. Many universities have over 30,000 students

concentrated in a small area. New ideas which arise as a response to a given issue may move readily among the students, and find their maximum base of support. Only a small percentage of the massive student bodies can often make a large demonstration. Thus in 1965-67, although opinion polls indicated that the great majority of American students supported the Viet Nam war, that anti-war sentiment within the group was no greater than in the population as a whole, the campus opposition was able to have a great impact because it could be mobilized. The anti-war student minority could and did man impressive anti-war demonstrations. During 1967-68, as the country as a whole turned increasingly critical of the war, campus opinion, both student and faculty, has moved to a majority anti-war position. This has placed the student anti-war activist groups in a very strong position, comparable to the one held earlier by the civil rights organizations; their goals, if not always their means, are approved by the community within which they operate.

It remains true, as Herbert Marcuse pointed out recently, that the majority of the students in all countries are politically quiescent and moderate in their views. According to national surveys of student opinion

taken by the Harris Poll in 1965 and the Gallup Poll in 1968, approximately one fifth of the students have participated in civil rights or political activities (17 percent in 1964-65, the year of the Berkeley revolt, and 20 percent in 1967-68, the year of the McCarthy and Kennedy campaigns). The radical activist groups generally have tiny memberships. The American new left Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) claims a total membership of about 30,000 out of a national student body of seven million. A Harris Poll of American students taken in the spring of 1968 estimates that there are about 100,000 radical activists, or somewhere between one and two percent of the college population.

The opinion surveys of American students indicate that the large majority are not sympathetic with radical doctrines and tactics. Yet the activist elements, both liberals and leftists, dominated the political tone of many campuses and have played a major role in influencing American politics in the 1960s. Given the fact that the activists are a relatively small minority, the question must be raised as who are they, what are the factors which contribute to activist strength.

The major conclusion to be drawn from a large number of studies in the U.S.A. and other countries is that left students are largely the children of left or liberal parents. The activists, particularly, are more radical or activist than their parents, but both parents and children are located on the same side of the spectrum. Conversely, studies of those active in conservative student groupings, like the Goldwaterite Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) indicate that they are largely from rightist backgrounds. Students are more idealistic and committed than their parents, but generally in the same direction.

In line with these findings, the available data indicate that the student left in the U.S.A. is disproportionately Jewish. Adult Jews in the U.S.A. are overwhelmingly liberal or radical. Studies of activists at the Universities of Chicago, Wisconsin, Columbia, and California, all report that Jewish participation in leftist activism has far outweighed their proportion in the student body.

Intellectuals, academics, writers, musicians, and so forth in the U.S.A. tend as a group to be disproportionately on the left. They are either liberal Democrats, or supporters of left-wing minor parties. And studies of

student populations suggest that students who are intellectually oriented, who identify as "intellectuals," or who aspire to intellectual pursuits after graduation, are also much more prone to be on the left and favorable to activism than those inclined to business and professional occupations.

Among faculty and students, there are clear-cut correlations between disciplines and political orientations. On the whole those involved in the humanities and social sciences, or in the more pure theoretical fields of science, are more likely to be on the left than those in the more practical, applied, or experimental fields. Such variations, however, would appear to be more a product of selective entrance into different disciplines than of the effects of the content of the fields on those pursuing them as students or practitioners. Thus studies of entering freshmen, i.e., those who have not yet taken a single lecture, report the same relationships between intended college major and political attitudes as are found among seniors, graduate students, and faculty. Morris Rosenberg, who conducted a panel study (repeat interviews with the same people two years apart) of students reported that

political orientation proved to be a major determinant of shifts in undergraduate major. A large proportion of the minority of conservatives who chose liberal (in political terms) majors as freshmen changed to subjects studied by conservatives, while many liberals who had selected conservative majors, tended to shift to fields which were presumably more congenial with their political outlook.

The relationships between academic fields and political sympathies are also linked to the finding that the leftist activists within American universities tend to come from relatively well-to-do backgrounds as compared to the student population generally. A comparison by Braungart and Westby of the delegates to conventions of SDS and YAF also indicated that the left-wingers come from somewhat more affluent backgrounds than the rightists. The majority of the latter are the children of conservative businessmen and professionals, but they include a significant proportion, one-fifth, from working-class origins, a group almost unrepresented among the SDS delegates. In general, studies of the social backgrounds of students in different disciplines suggest that those who major in the liberal arts subjects and have an intellectual

or scholarly bent have well-educated parents, while first-generation college students of lowly origins tend to be vocationally oriented in a narrow sense. They are more likely to be found among those preparing to become engineers, businessmen, and the like. They come disproportionately from that segment of the less privileged which is strongly oriented towards upward mobility and the values of the privileged. Their strong concentration on professional objectives, plus the need of many of them to hold a job during school term, also results in these students being less available for political activities than those from more privileged families. These findings not only hold up within schools, but may also help to explain the fact that colleges attended by large numbers of less well-to-do students, Negroes apart, are less likely to be strongholds of left-wing groups than those which educate the scions of the upper-middle-class.

The political character of certain schools also may be linked to other sources of selective recruitment and the resultant political orientation of their students. In the U.S.A., those with a large number of well-to-do Jewish students, or currently, with the rise of Negro

militancy, of black students, tend to be centers of leftist activism. High level liberal arts colleges with an intellectual aura attract students oriented to becoming intellectuals. Thus we may account for the pattern of student protest at schools like Reed, Swarthmore, Antioch, and others. The best state universities, as judged in terms of faculty scholarly prominence, e.g., California, Michigan and Wisconsin, are also schools which have become the most important centers of confrontationist politics. These schools attract a disproportionate number of intellectually oriented students, including many Jews.

The political traditions and images of certain universities also may play an important role in determining the orientations of their students and faculty. In the United States, Madison and Berkeley have maintained a record as centers of radicalism. The University of Wisconsin image goes back to before World War I -- the strength of Progressive and Socialist politics in the state contributed to its political aura. Berkeley is a particularly interesting case in point. The San Francisco Bay area has a history dating back to the turn of the century as being among the most liberal-left communities in the nation.

Various pieces of data pertaining to the Berkeley campus since the end of World War II point up the continuity of that university as a center of leftism. In his Memoirs, George Kennan reports his puzzlement as of 1946, that his West Coast academic lecture audiences, and those at Berkeley especially, tended to be much more sympathetic to the Soviet Union than those at other universities. Berkeley was the only major institution in the country to sustain a major faculty revolt against restrictive anti-Communist personnel policies in the form of the loyalty oath controversy of 1949-50. The data collected by Paul Lazarsfeld in a national opinion survey of the attitudes of social scientists conducted in 1954 to evaluate the effect of McCarthyism on universities indicated that the Berkeley faculty were the most liberal of any of the schools sampled in this study. In 1963-64, the year before the celebrated Berkeley student revolt, San Francisco Bay area students received national publicity for a series of massive successful sit-in demonstrations at various business firms designed to secure jobs for Negroes. Prior to the emergence of the FSM protest, the Berkeley campus probably had more different left-wing and activist groups with more members than any other school in

the country. The vigor and effectiveness of the Free Speech Movement must in some part be credited to the prior existence of a well organized and politically experienced group of activist students. A study of the 600 students who held a police car captive in the first major confrontation of that affair in October 1964, reported that over half of them had taken part in at least one previous demonstration, and that 15 percent indicated they had taken part in seven or more.

In stressing that involvement in leftist student activism is a function of the general political orientation which students bring to the university, it is not being argued that changes in attitude do not occur, or even that conversions do not take place. Universities clearly do have a liberalizing effect so that there is a gradual shift to the left. A significant number of students in the mid-1960s have been much more radical in their actions and opinions than post-war generations of American students, or than their parents. The larger events which created a basis for a renewed visible radical movement have influenced many students to the left of the orientation in which they were reared. Many students of liberal parents have felt impelled to act out the moral

imperatives implicit in the seemingly "academic" liberalism of the older generation. Political events combined with various elements in the situation of students pressed a number of liberal students to become active radicals. The principal predisposing factors which determined who among the students would become activists, however, existed before they entered the university.

However, if we hold pre-university orientation constant, it obviously will make a difference which university a student attends, what subjects he decides to major in, who his friends are on the campus, what his relations are with his teachers of varying political persuasions, what particular extra-curricular activities he happens to get involved in, and the like. The relationships between the orientations which students form before university and the choices they make after entering which help maintain their general political stances are only correlations; many students necessarily behave differently from the way these relationships would predict.

Clearly, conversions, drastic changes in belief, in political identity, do occur among university students, as among other groups. During a period in which events shift

the larger political climate to the left or right, young people, with fewer ties to the past, are undoubtedly more likely to change than older ones. There is also a special aspect of university life, which enhances the chances that certain groups of students will be more likely to find satisfaction in intense political experience. Various studies suggest that mobility, particularly geographic mobility, where one becomes a stranger in an unfamiliar social context, is conducive to making individuals available for causes which invoke intense commitment.

Thus new students, or recent transfers, are more likely to be politically active than those who have been in the social system for longer periods. The various Berkeley studies underwrite this. Local students, or those relatively close to home, are less likely to be active than those who are a considerable distance from their home communities. In Berkeley, Madison, and other university centers, the activists have come disproportionately from the ranks of the migrants, and of recently arrived new students.

Some of the recent research by psychologists seeks to go beyond the analysis of factors which seem to have a

direct impact on political choice. They have also sought to account for varying orientations and degrees of involvement by personality traits. Thus, they have looked at such factors as variations in the way different groups of students have been reared by their parents, i.e., in a permissive or authoritarian atmosphere, as well as investigating family relationships, student intelligence, sociability, and the like. Such studies have reported interesting and relatively consistent differences between the minority of student activists and the rest of the student population. At the moment, however, these findings are unconvincing, in large part because the extant studies do not hold the sociological and politically relevant factors in the backgrounds of the students constant. For example, they report that leftist activists tend to be the offspring of permissive families as judged by child-rearing practices, and of families characterized by a strong mother who dominates family life and decisions. Conversely, conservative activists tend to come from families with more strict relationships between parents and children, and in which the father plays a dominant controlling role. To a considerable extent these differences correspond to the variations reported in studies of

Jewish and Protestant families. Childhood rearing practices tend to be linked to socio-cultural-political outlooks. To prove that such factors play an independent role in determining the political choices of students, it will first be necessary to compare students within similar ethnic, religious, and political-cultural environments. This has not yet been done.

But if we cannot conclude that the differences in the family structures of committed leftists and rightists are causally related to the side of the spectrum which they choose, that fact that they have been reared differently should mean that they vary in their personality traits and consequent political styles. David Riesman has pointed out that conservative student activists seem to be afraid of the emotion of pity and compassion, that they find a concern for the "weak" threatening. Conversely, the leftists, more likely to have been raised in female-dominated families, are more prone to be open expressively toward "feminine" concerns. The possibility that American left-wing students come from more permissive and female-dominated families than their European counterparts may be linked to the fact that they have shown a greater impatience to wait, to take a prolonged time perspective.

As yet, however, attempts to draw political conclusions from such psychological differences must be presented as informed guesses.

In evaluating the growing body of research on the characteristics of leftist activists by psychologists, it is also important to note whether they are being compared with other activists, or as often is done, with data from the bulk of the student population; that is, largely the passive majority. Leftist activists should be compared with conservative activists, and with those involved in nonpolitical forms of campus activity. The limited efforts in these directions indicate that some of the characteristics which have been identified as those of leftist activists, such as greater intelligence, characterize the involved generally. Both leftist and conservative activists, as well as moderates involved in student government, are drawn from the ranks of the academically talented in the United States.

Efforts to distinguish among the social and psychological traits of students of different persuasions which concentrate primarily on activists, also present special

analytical problems inherent in the fact that whether or not students direct their extra-curricular energies into politics is strongly linked to political orientations. Studies of student bodies in different countries indicate that those on the left generally (and the small group on the extreme right) view politics as an appropriate and even necessary university activity. Committed morally to the need for major social changes, leftists feel that the university should be an agency for social change; that both they and their professors should devote a considerable portion of their activities to politics.

Conversely, however, the less leftist students are, the more likely they are to disagree with this view, the more prone they will be to feel that the university should be an apolitical "house of study." Liberals and leftists, therefore, are much more likely to be politically active than moderates and conservatives. A relatively strong conservative stance will not be reflected in membership or activity in a conservative political club. This means that on any given campus or in any country, the visible forms of student politics will suggest that the student population as a whole is more liberal or radical leftist than it actually is. Since conservative academic

ideology fosters campus political passivity, one should not expect to find much conservative activity.

Presumably it takes a lower threshold of political interest or concern to activate a liberal or leftist than a conservative. One would deduce, therefore, that the average conservative student activist should be more of an extremist within his ideological tendency than the average liberal. Hence a comparison of campus activities of different persuasions should contain a greater share of extremists among the conservatives than among the liberals.

No society should find it remarkable that a visible proportion of its student population is actively involved in politics. It can be strongly argued that the circumstances of their being a "privileged" group which give them the psychic security to act are also among the factors which make their activism possible. It can also be argued on the same grounds that a politically inactive student population is a cause for greater misgivings than an active one.

What does justify concern, of course, is the existence within the revived student movement of a deeply committed group of activists who are contemptuous of democratic procedures, including those of free speech,

elections, and the open competition of ideas within the university itself. The tactics of civil disobedience, which took hold in the civil rights struggles in the repressive American South, have diffused internationally and are now employed in battles within the university, which cannot deal with them in a manner befitting its educational role, as well as in efforts to change the policies of democratically elected governments which allow free speech and assembly. There is no question that these are effective tactics, but they also have the effect of weakening the structure of democratic legitimacy. Such tactics can create an electoral "backlash" which strengthens right-wingers as in California in 1966, and in Germany, France and Japan in 1968. More importantly, civil disobedience weakens the respect for the rule of law which guarantees the rights of all minorities, of all whose opinions or traits are considered as obnoxious by the majority. Indiscriminate use of such tactics by students and others may result in the undermining of the rule of law and the encouragement to all groups (including the military) to take the law and general power into their hands whenever they feel frustrated politically. Hence, it is

important for the future of democracy and of social change that the revived student activism should operate within the processes of democracy. In the United States, those students who campaigned for McCarthy helped to bring the country's diplomats to the peace table in Paris, and to convince Lyndon Johnson to withdraw as a candidate. These young campaigners have so far been more successful than the French, German, and Japanese confrontationists who contributed to right-wing electoral revivals. If American student activists shift to attacking the electoral process itself by obstructing the campaigns of candidates whom they oppose, they, too, may find that their foremost contribution to political history turns out to be the strengthening of candidates who favor order, reaction, and a nationalist foreign policy.